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THE CHRISTIAN
—TASK—

J. Harold Du Bois

A handwritten mark or signature consisting of a large, stylized loop on the left side, followed by a horizontal line extending to the right. The mark is drawn with a single continuous stroke.

(Du Bois)

ZEE



THE CHRISTIAN TASK

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THE CHRISTIAN TASK

A Discussion of the Supreme Need
of the Age: How Christianity
Can Satisfy It

J. HAROLD DU BOIS

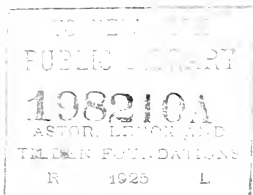


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THE author wishes to acknowledge his particular indebtedness to Professor William Adams Brown, of Union Theological Seminary, whose teaching was the direct inspiration of this work. The present volume, in fact, is the outgrowth of a paper which was prepared and submitted in fulfillment of the requirement in a course entitled "A Theology for the New Age," which was given by Professor Brown at Union Theological Seminary during the first semester of the year 1918-1919. The author's indebtedness to his teacher, however, is much wider than this single course, and manifests itself in various phases and sections of his work.



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CHAPTER I

THE NEED STATED: THE NEED OF A TASK

The whole world seems to be conscious of the fact that the War has brought us to the threshold of a new age. The best of human understanding everywhere insists upon interpreting the momentous experience through which we have passed as being at once the death throes of an old civilization and the birth pangs of a new world order. All serious-minded men are aware of the fact that it is incumbent upon them to play some part in the new times which are at hand, and are eager to learn just what their particular relationship to the new age will and ought to be. It is realized that what we face are not new certainties, but new possibilities and opportunities, and that whether or not these opportunities are to be utilized for the best depends upon us. A new age is at hand, but it waits to be seen what we shall make out of it.

It is this combined element of certainty and uncertainty, of opportunity and responsibility, which tends to draw out the very best that is in us. Because of it we are not only constrained to prepare ourselves for the changes which are bound to come from the efforts of others, regardless of what our own individual attitudes toward the new age may be, but are encouraged to go to work to create out of these uncertainties the right kind of actualities. We feel that a double obligation rests upon us. We must work to create out of the new age a

better age, and we must prepare ourselves for the coming of this better age. Only in appearance, however, is the obligation dual. In fact it is single, for it is only through helping to bring in a better age that we can hope to prepare ourselves for its coming. We become true inheritors of the age by first being its benefactors. It is through giving all that we gain all.

Consequently, the most important question which each of us must ask himself is, What can I do to serve the age in which I live? Or if the problem is the larger one — which we have set for ourselves — of the relation of Christianity to the new age, the question will be similar: What can Christianity do to serve the age which is at hand?

It is quite evident that in order to answer these and related questions it is necessary first to determine the needs of the age in which we live, for service is nothing other than the satisfying of needs. What some of these needs are it is by no means difficult to determine. Difficulty arises only when we attempt to distinguish between these needs, to classify them, to arrange them in the order of their importance, and to pick out those which seem to be basal. It is to this more difficult task that we have set ourselves. What we are to seek for is not all of the needs of the age. We want, if possible, to discover what is the supreme need of the age.

The writer himself is thoroughly convinced that it is possible to discover a fundamental need of the age around which all other needs can be grouped, to which they can be subordinated, or upon which they must be erected.

He does not hesitate to say at the very outset that in his opinion the supreme need of the age is the need of something to do, the need of some gigantic undertaking — in a word, the need of a task, or in still simpler Anglo-Saxon, the need of a job.

If the age were advertising its most important need, the writer feels strongly that its advertisement would not be that of a traveler in a strange land who desires a guide, or that of some irresponsible and helpless individual who requires the services of a guardian, or that of an ambitionless idler who needs a counselor or manager, or that of a lonely old lady who seeks a companion, or that of a youth who wants a tutor, or even that of a successful business man whose increasing activities create a demand for more help. All of these advertisements suggest needs which are important, but no one of these needs by itself constitutes what could be termed the supreme need of the age.

Still less would the age's advertisement take the form — as some would have us believe — of a notice of bankruptcy. The world, during the past four years, has been pretty roughly handled. Its ordinary business has been disrupted. It has been visited by a calamity which has been terribly destructive of its goods and its life. But it is still a good deal more than a dreary cemetery or a pile of junk. It is a long way from being bankrupt, either spiritually or materially. Its assets still exceed its liabilities. It does not propose to go into the receiver's hands, to close its doors after selling out its damaged goods at a monster war-sale, or to hang up the sign "Under

New Management." While alterations are being made, it is going to continue to do business at the old stand, under the old name, on a grander scale.

There are others who would have us believe that what the age stands most in need of is the rest-cure. They picture the race as having had its energy and spirit exhausted by the experience of the War. Blinded, gassed, and suffering from shell-shock, it struggles along, a nervous wreck on crutches, its whole thought centered on wheel-chairs, nurses, doctors, hospitals, sanitariums, or quiet secluded resorts. But the truth of the matter is that mankind, on the whole, has emerged from the recent conflict with its spirit awakened rather than dimmed, its energy increased rather than destroyed. To be sure, it exhibits the fresh wounds of battle; it wears bandages which are soaked in its warm life's blood; it is battered, and scratched, and torn, and mangled; but these misfortunes are overlooked in the excitement and joy of service and accomplishment.

The spirit of the race, indeed, is that of the dough-boy who is pictured on the well-known liberty loan poster entitled, "And they said we couldn't fight." No doubt the dough-boy was as greatly surprised to discover his latent ability as were his enemies; but the picture suggests that in no sense is the dough-boy to be satisfied either with the discovery of this ability or with the use to which he has already put it. The determination to make added and real use of the newly discovered ability is prominent in the picture. It is a picture, not of an invalid, but of a crusader.

And so it is with the race, which has been startled by a new consciousness of tremendous power to accomplish things. It has discovered its ability to fight; fight, in some way, it must. It hears the call, not of the idle resort, but of the battlefield. Work, not rest, is its insistent demand.

No, if the age were to advertise its most important need, its advertisement would scarcely appear in the columns which deal with sanitariums and resorts, schools and colleges, bankruptcy sales, or help of various kinds wanted. It would appear in the column "Situations Wanted," and it would be the advertisement, not of any of the individuals to whom I referred above, but of a young man who has just completed a long, tedious, yet entirely successful course of training, and who yearns for a real opportunity to put his knowledge and skill to a supreme test. It would be an advertisement for a job.

Geologists tell us that the earth has reached the period of decrepit old age; but there can be no doubt but that humanity has just celebrated the attainment of its majority. In a very real sense the race has just completed its special period of discipline and training. It has graduated into early active middle life. So far as it is concerned, the coming age must be one of active service. In a thousand ways mankind is making known its desire for a task.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED ANALYZED: THE NEED AND THE AGE

If the foregoing characterization of the age is correct, it is clearly evident that not any kind of a task will do. The newly initiated are usually most insistent upon their rights and most confident of their abilities. Untried skill is always most particular about the nature of the tasks to which it applies itself. It can afford to be so. Ambition will learn soon enough to walk warily. What the world needs to see is not a smaller but a larger display of this tendency of confident youth to be particular about the kind of service it performs. It will pay us, therefore, to search further to see just what kind of a task the age desires and needs. It is only as we uncover the successive points in an analysis of the kind of a task that the age needs that the full significance of our claim that the need of a task is the supreme need of the age will be disclosed.

1. A BIG TASK: A RESTLESSLY AMBITIOUS AGE

The first quality which must be possessed by the task which will prove satisfactory to the new age is the more or less comprehensive characteristic which is adequately, although somewhat vaguely, described by the adjective "big." The primary demand of the age is for a big task. There is a very widespread feeling that long enough have we as individuals, as nations, as churches, as societies of one kind and another, engaged ourselves in the menial

tasks of catching fish and collecting taxes. Our ears are tuned for a call to a wider service.

While we wait we are restless. Our age, in fact, is an age of unrest. This unrest permeates every department of our life. Evidences of political unrest, of religious unrest, of industrial unrest, are preeminent facts in our daily experience. They are facts which can be explained adequately only on the ground that our jobs are too small for us. We are conscious of individual and corporate capacities which our tasks have not begun to fathom. We feel that we have an infinite reserve of capability upon which we have not yet begun to draw. We are no longer content to be maggots. The restrictions of the past, even though they may have been protections, must be cast off; our freedom must be exercised. Responsibility is what we crave. Give us that and inspiration will not be lacking.

If for any reason we are compelled to continue at menial and mechanical tasks, which hitherto have been entirely devoid of wide meaning or significance, we now insist that we at least be made to realize the bearing of our work upon the larger work which we make possible. It may not be for all of us to accomplish big things, but we can be satisfied with no less than the consciousness that what we do constitutes a direct and necessary contribution to world need.

No wonder the age is restless, for a consciousness of infinite capacity for service is breaking upon the mind of humanity. The mustard seed of faith is finally germinating: mountains must be moved.

2. A PRACTICAL TASK: A PRACTICALLY SCIENTIFIC AGE

This is a practical age as well as an age of unrest, and the demand of the age is for a practical as well as a big task. By a practical task I mean, in part, a task which recognizes that men have other than spiritual needs. There are mental needs, physical needs, and industrial needs, which beg as persistently and justly for satisfaction as do spiritual needs. If we ignore the former, we can never hope to meet the latter satisfactorily. All of these needs are closely related. No single kind of need can be isolated from the remainder and overcome in isolation. To be overcome successfully, human need must be attacked at the several points at which it discloses itself.

I have spoken as though we have been at fault in this connection, and as though our error has always taken the form of an over-emphasis upon spiritual needs. This is not wholly the case; but it is true that the Church, which has rightly conceived of its province as being chiefly that of the spirit, has perhaps been the chief offender in this connection, and its error has consisted in this failure to see the close connection between the spirit and the other phases of man's nature. It is the Church which, when there has been a demand for bread, has been most prone to change the subject to a consideration of the theory of the Church and of the rock upon which it was founded. It is the Church which, when a request has been made for fish, has been most likely to substitute an un-nourishing disputation on original sin and the serpent in the garden. But the error does sometimes take the

form of an over-emphasis upon one or another of the other kinds of need. In such cases the violation of the requirement of a practical task is even more serious, for it is true that the ultimate purpose of man must be spiritual, and to a certain extent, therefore, the extra emphasis which the Church has been prone to put upon spiritual needs can be justified. Justice, however, cannot be satisfied if the related needs are to any degree ignored. They may be subordinated, but they must not be neglected.

The age demands a practical task by insisting that proper consideration be paid to needs of every kind. It demands that human need be studied and approached scientifically — a demand which is a natural result of the fact that the age is at once a scientific and a practical age.

The new age will not be satisfied with a job of peddling milk, unless this task is seen to be closely related to other than the physical needs of man. The age will not accept a teaching position, unless this vocation is viewed in its wider ramifications. This age could never be constrained to undertake the task of organizing labor, unless the bearing of better working conditions upon the higher phases of man's life is made apparent. Much less could the present age ever be inveigled into accepting a job of distributing evangelical leaflets or of performing any of the other less practical tasks which are so numerous in the religious field. The former tasks, taken in themselves, are practical in a sense which is in no way true of the latter. But it is only when they are viewed in their wider relations that the best of these tasks become practical in the scientific sense which is demanded by the new age.

The age demands a task of the widest social, educational, political, industrial, ethical, and religious reform, which aims at the development of a more perfect environment and a higher type of personal character. It is an age which prefers to say, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk" rather than to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

3. A CONSTRUCTIVE TASK: A POSITIVELY CREATIVE AGE

It is necessary, in the third place, that the task to which the new age can devote itself wholeheartedly should be in the highest and fullest sense constructive. In the light of the recent world-situation this need for constructive activity is so obvious and its meaning so clear that lengthy illustration and discussion of the point are not necessary.

As we indicated above, the race heretofore has been in a special period of training which has actually, if not necessarily, involved a large amount of activity which has been to a considerable extent of a destructive nature. Owing to the fact that its training and experience were yet incomplete, the race has erred or fallen short of perfection in its application of principles and has lapsed into attitudes and activities which have not furthered its highest interests.

These errors have taken a multitude of different forms. They have disclosed themselves, in the field of industry, in the form of boycotts, lockouts, strikes, sabotage, and unlimited competition. Natural resources have been squandered. Wide sections of country have been ruthlessly deforested and rivers have been polluted, and the health

and well-being of thousands thereby endangered. The national ideal has been that of struggle, of isolation and self-sufficiency. Delinquents have been punished, imprisoned, and destroyed. Criticism of all kinds has tended to be destructive. We have laid emphasis upon what we do not believe. In the field of morals we have stressed the "shalt nots."

But it is a cardinal element in the faith of the new age that this special period of training has come to a close with the greatest destructive act that the human race has ever perpetrated — that the negative destructive principle has spent its all and failed in one gigantic final attempt to justify itself. To be sure, mankind has yet much to learn. Its entire life must, in a real sense, be one long course of training. But faith insists that in another sense, which is no less real, the special period of training is over and a special period of constructive application is at hand.

The new age is a positively creative age. It is entirely out of sympathy with the passive and negative attitudes which have been prominent heretofore. It insists upon the positive, constructive attitude which displays itself in projects of reclaiming arid and swamp lands, of conserving natural resources of one kind or another, of improving waterways and harbors, of promoting trade and intercourse, of constructing railroads, bridges, and canals. Class rivalries and antagonisms are to be eliminated through promoting justice. Sin, sickness, and crime are to be prevented by improving environmental conditions of all kinds. The criminal is to be regarded as an object of reformation rather than condemnation. In short,

the new age is an age, not in which evil can be passively submitted to, not in which evil is to be overcome with evil, but in which good must be done regardless of whether or not evil is present.

The race has spent its allotted time in slavery in Egypt and in wandering in the wilderness. The time is now ripe for the seizing of the promised land and the building of the new Jerusalem. The new age demands a constructive task worthy of the true and abundant faith which did not shrink from saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." What the new age says is, "Destroy a civilization, and in half the time which it takes you to destroy it, I will rebuild upon its ruins a newer and fairer world order."

4. A COOPERATIVE TASK: AN AGE IN QUEST OF UNITY

We have already suggested the next characteristic which must be possessed by the task which will prove satisfactory to the new age, in indicating that the time has come when the competitive principle must give way to the cooperative. The new age is a cooperative age, an age in quest of unity. Mankind thrills with a new sense of solidarity, and demands a task which will require men to work together in the interests of a common end.

Here again we have a characteristic whose very patency is its sufficient proof. Evidences of a developing consciousness of social solidarity appear on every hand. The servant problem and the whole problem of the serious trend of population from the country to the city are but two of many contexts in which this tendency discloses

itself in simple and individual forms, for, to whatever else they may be partly due, it is certain that these and similar problems owe their existence to an important degree to a widespread dislike to work alone, to an almost universal demand for fellowship with others. The average girl worker prefers an irksome, dirty, mechanical, ill-paying factory job, which provides her with the opportunity for frequent or continual intercourse with her friends, to any position, no matter what other advantages it may possess, which denies to her this privilege. The ordinary laborer will turn down a job as a farm hand, which promises him a good living and a fair wage but denies him social intercourse, for a gang job, which suffers in comparison with the other position at every point except that of the privilege of companionship. Of all evils, it is of loneliness that men are most shy. To be alone is least to be endured. Individuals will sacrifice much for the sake of having companions. They want them, they need them, in their work as well as in their play.

This growing consciousness of kind and this demand for fellowship, this tendency to cooperate and unite with others, discloses itself as variously and strikingly in other realms of life than the individual. In the field of industry we discover, on the one hand, the important trend toward unity of ownership and of management and toward employers' associations of one kind and another, and, on the other hand, the prodigious phenomenon of organized labor. The woman movement is a similar manifestation in the more strictly political field. Even the churches are beginning to lay greater stress upon the

catholic principle of unity in essentials and to manifest a willingness, if not yet an active desire, to work together for certain common ends. And the final and most patent fact of all is the inspiring world-wide tendency toward internationalism. Even the nations of the world are beginning to see the need and to manifest a desire to work together for the accomplishment of certain common tasks.

The demand of the age for a job which will require men to work together for the attainment of common ends is thus due partly to a renewed consciousness of social solidarity — a consciousness which was active in an earlier stage of human history, but which had become more or less dulled in an age of individualism. This requirement, therefore, more than any of the other requirements we have thus far considered, is due to a resuscitation of a primitive element in man's makeup. The task which will prove satisfactory for the new age must be a task which will permit men to work together, for the consciousness of solidarity inherent in men of the present age demands it.

But there is a second element in this requirement which is not covered by the foregoing explanation. Primitive solidarity and cooperation were due largely to a sense of individual impotence, as it related to the negative desire to protect oneself. The present-day demand for cooperation finds its chief source elsewhere. It is not due to the individual sense of lack of power for ordinary needs. Rather it is due to the individual sense of insufficient power to accomplish alone the great task which the individual need not undertake, but nevertheless desires

to tackle. It is in no sense due to the fact that man cannot possibly get along by himself, for in present-day society it is a fact that, to a large extent, he can. It is due rather to the fact that the present age insists on setting itself to the accomplishment of a big, practical, constructive task—a task of such a nature that it cannot possibly be successfully accomplished unless all men cooperate in its interests. In other words, in demanding a big task, the age necessarily demands a cooperative task.

The requirement of a cooperative task, therefore, is due to a double necessity, an inner necessity in the form of an inherent and universal desire on the part of man for fellowship with his kind, and an outer necessity in the form of a need of accomplishing successfully the kind of a task which the age demands. There is active in the race a sense of unity which demands a cooperative task. There is in the world a need for a greater sense of unity, which can be created only through cooperative labor. In seeking a cooperative task, the new age seeks to satisfy an already existing sense of unity and to develop a greater sense of unity. Its desire for a cooperative task is, indeed, a prayer that the unity which already partly exists may be made perfect.

5. A TASK FOR THE TASK'S SAKE: AN AGE IN QUEST OF HAPPINESS

The task which will satisfy the demand of the new age can be described further by adding that it must be a task which can be undertaken for its own sake. I mean by this that the task for the new age must possess the

qualities which will justify making its performance the ultimate end of existence. Mankind has had enough of mixed purposes and multiple allegiances. It has wearied of reward-hunting and self-seeking. It has wandered aimlessly through a maze of preoccupations and entanglements until it is frantic. The need of a single main purpose in life has begun to be realized. A search is on for a task which can command the undivided allegiance, the unlimited interest, the unstinted effort, of an entire race. A big, practical, constructive, cooperative task is wanted. The race is not going to work to save its respectability. The race is not going to work to gain a living, or for any other reason. The new age wants work for work's sake. It wants a task to the direct performance of which every other activity must be subordinated.

Work for work's sake, however, does not require the absolute elimination of all other motives. It does not, for instance, exclude the consciousness of the effect of our work upon others. This is because of the fact that the work which takes the form of service of others is the only form of work which the new age will recognize. Service and work are synonyms in the terminology of the new age. The direct effects produced in others by our service of them are integral parts of the final effects which we wish to bring about through our labor. These effects, however, are of primary concern only as they are viewed in their bearing upon the race as a whole and upon the whole task which is being pursued. When considered in their bearing upon the individuals in whom they are produced, they are of distinctly secondary concern. In

both cases the effects are the same. It is merely that the same effects have a greater value and wider significance when viewed in their relation to the whole than when viewed in their relation to a part.

The relation of the individual to the race is not that of means to end, or vice versa. The relationship is simply that of a part to the whole. The individual and the race are two inseparable phases of the same thing. The realization of one is bound up with the realization of the other. A consciousness of the effect of our services upon others is permissible, but only because of the identity of these effects with the effects produced by the same services upon the race. Our final reason for performing every service must be its effect upon the race. The service of other individuals for their own sakes is usually called altruism. The new age demands a higher form of altruism in the service of others for the sake of the race. It is altruistic in the highest sense. It wants to serve all for the sake of all.

But while work for work's sake not only permits but requires altruism of the highest form, it excludes every form of selfishness. If it did not, it could not satisfy the new age, for this age demands a task which requires self-forgetfulness. The men of this age desire continually to risk themselves. This is not to say, however, that work for work's sake excludes the consciousness of the effect of our work upon ourselves. The service of others for the sake of the race necessarily produces its effects in the life of the servant as well as in the lives of those who are served. These effects, as in the former case, are effects for the

race as well as for the individual who performed the services, and because of this identity the consciousness that they are effects in his life is permitted to the servant.

The consciousness of reflex effects of one's work upon oneself, however, must be subordinated, not only to one's consciousness of the effects of his work upon the race as a whole, but also to one's consciousness of the effects of his work upon the particular individuals whom he serves. In other words, in spite of the fact that the two sets of effects have an equally direct and important bearing upon the race as a whole, the laws of moral activity require that the effects produced by our own moral actions in our own lives, viewed either from the individual or the racial standpoint, ought to be subordinate in our minds to the effects produced by our moral actions in the lives of others. It is, moreover, more important that we should always think of ourselves as members of the race than that we should always regard others in the same light. Successful moral action requires that, so far as we are able, we should regard the whole race, with the exception of ourselves, as the object of our services. The thought of other individuals than ourselves should influence our acts only secondarily. Ourselves as members of the race should be of least concern to us. Thought of ourselves as individuals should be entirely eliminated.

In demanding a task which can be prosecuted for its own sake, it is seen that the new age makes room for the exercise of a lofty form of altruism and of what might be called personalism — using person to refer to the unit of the race in its social rather than individual aspect.

Individualism, however, as it is usually understood, is eliminated.

But work for work's sake, while allowing for altruism, transcends it. The weakness of altruism lies in the fact that it takes it for granted that the effects produced by work have an existence and permanence apart from the acts which produced them. This is not the case. The most real effects produced by moral action are the personal happiness derived directly from its performance and the ability to perform greater moral acts. If this ability is not made use of in the performance of the works which it makes possible, it is soon lost. If moral activity ceases, the joy of service immediately flees. There is a constant necessity, therefore, for permanent moral activity. When this is once realized, it is soon seen that it is eternal work, rather than the changing and transient effects produced by work, which is of supreme importance and lasting significance. For all practical purposes, service becomes an end in itself. Instead of merely the means of salvation, service becomes in a real sense salvation itself. We learn to work for work's sake. It is work for work's sake that the age needs.

Prophetic words, spoken recently by that shrewd, far-seeing statesman of France, Clemenceau, bear powerful testimony to the truth of our contention. "It is in work, and in work alone," so runs his interesting pronouncement, "that the world, emerging from social and economic chaos, shall find its salvation. Let us work!"—words which have been given beautiful symbolical representation in the striking poster by the young French artist, G. G. Gamer, entitled, "After Victory, to Work."

6. AN ETERNAL TASK: AN AGE IN QUEST OF SECURITY

The final characteristic which must be possessed by the task which the new age seeks is a direct development from the idea of the eternity of work. If service is absolutely essential to existence and progress, if it is salvation itself, it stands to reason that the task to which the new age desires to set itself, cannot, from the very nature of the case, be a task entirely capable of accomplishment. The new age must find an eternal task, a task which can never play out; else it cannot be sure but that service may sometime come to an end and salvation be lost.

The age does not for a moment seek security in any absolute sense. It desires rather that the search for salvation should involve a large element of personal responsibility and risk. It does not want to feel sure that it is going to be saved completely and finally; but it does desire that feeling of deepest joy which indicates that it is being saved, and the assurance that eternal happiness is possible. It desires, in other words, a task which is capable of calling forth the highest moral activity now and forever.

Eternal happiness, however, hinges not only upon the possibility of eternal work, but also upon the possibility of forever being in a position which will allow of our engaging in that work. There must be an eternal element in us as well as in our task, if salvation of the kind which we have been discussing is to last forever.

It is possible and, from one point of view, perhaps necessary to think that the race will come to an end in due time; but from the practical standpoint, which must

always control, it is not difficult to discover an eternal element in the race and consequently to believe in the possibility of its eternal activity. But with the individual it is different. Whether or not the individual will forever be in a position which will enable him to be eternally active is not so clear to us. Death is a mysterious experience in the life of every individual, which has no apparent counterpart in the life of the race. However, to all who have caught the true spirit of the attitude which we have been describing as typical of the present age, it seems practically necessary that the individual whose life on earth is characterized by a steady progress in moral activity and the joyful experience of ever-increasing salvation will, after death, continue to exist in some higher form which will permit of endless progress along the same lines. So great is the love of service in the new age, so great is the importance attached to it and the happiness derived from it, that an earnest hope of personal immortality becomes absolutely necessary.

And it might be added that for those who, for one reason or another, have been denied the happy experience of present salvation the need is the same, although it probably is not recognized to be so. The desire for eternal rest has often been the source of the hope of immortality, but what the child cut off in immaturity and the overburdened workingman need is not rest, but eternal work of the right kind, under the right conditions.

The spirit of the new age allows no room for retirement either in this life or the life to come. The new age demands eternal work. It prefers individual annihilation to a

heaven which cannot satisfy this demand, for any other kind of a heaven than a heaven of work would, for the representative citizen of the new age, be a veritable hell. The new age is on a search for a task which will insure both the individual and the race against the coming of that night when no man can work, or when work shall be no more.

CHAPTER III

THE NEED EMPHASIZED: THE NEED AND THE WAR

Now that we have described in detail the kind of a task the age needs, I believe that any who may have found it difficult to agree with our opening claim will be ready to agree that the need of a task is the supreme need of the age, and that if Christianity meets this need it will perform for the race a service of a magnitude and importance which will justify its being regarded as the salvation of the world. At this point, however, some may be inclined to say: Yes, the age needs just such a task as has been described; but is the age conscious of this need? Is there not, in other words, a preliminary need of awakening the age to a lively consciousness of this need of a task?

To a very large extent the answer to this question was implicit in the preceding discussion. That the age is already acutely sensitive to the need of a task is so truly a fact that it was impossible to prevent this fact from being constantly reflected in our description of the kind of a task the age needs. It was impossible to speak always of "what the age needs." We had often to refer to "what the age wants," "what the age seeks," "what the age desires," "what the age demands." Our illustrations were necessarily drawn, in large part, from already prevailing tendencies toward the ideal which we were describing rather than from opposing tendencies which

need to be overcome. The very nature of the present situation required that our emphasis throughout our preceding discussion be largely positive rather than negative. We necessarily gave constant evidence in support of the fact that the need we were describing is a need which is already felt acutely.

Our principal proof of this fact, however, was deliberately, although with considerable arbitrariness, reserved, in order that it might be presented as a whole in this place. What I refer to, of course, is the great experience of the War. The War, seen in its true light and taken in itself, is not only our finest, but a sufficient, piece of evidence in support of the fact that the age feels the need of a task acutely. The truth of this statement will be seen more clearly as we proceed to discuss the War in the light of the several requirements which we have pointed out as belonging to the ideal task.

1. THE WAR AS A BIG TASK

It was as a task, a big task, which embodied to a larger degree than any other single and definite undertaking of all time the various characteristics which we have attributed to the ideal task, that the War made its appeal to the world and won the efficient, whole-hearted, and sacrificial services of almost an entire race. It was a task which at least began to sound man's infinite capacity for service. It took men who were idling in dissipated unemployment; men also from colleges, offices, shops, and mines; managers from the biggest business enterprises in existence, and gave them real jobs. It took women

out of society or left them in the home, and gave them big tasks which only the truly brave could bear. It snatched the masks off multitudes who were going about in various complete disguises and disclosed to the world heroes and heroines. The wondrous heroism and efficiency with which the gigantic feats and difficult tasks required by the War were performed will long be the marvel of the world. What these marvellous accomplishments were has been too widely advertised to require tabulation here.

Some people prefer to think of war as being the national way of going on a drunken spree. It is certain, however, that this is not the main impression which one must get from the recent war. More than any other one thing the recent war impressed itself upon the mind of mankind as a big task.

The fact that the world received the War with the same soberness with which a great task is undertaken is beautifully illustrated in Paul Sabatier's story of how the War came to France — an account which is of more general application than the author made it. This powerful description of a concrete instance will do more than any abstract argument of mine to bring home the full meaning of my point, so I quote part of it.

After setting forth in some detail the far from ideal situation which prevailed in France up to the time of the War, Sabatier describes the spirit in which war was received by his own immediate community, which he claimed to be fairly typical of France as a whole:

“On Thursday the 30th of July, early in the morning, a few neighbors came to inform me that soldiers who had

arrived on the evening of the day before, with three or four days' leave, had been recalled by telegram a few minutes after their arrival home. The newspapers received a little later said nothing of the measure; so that one wondered if it was only of a local character. Yet it had spread alarm through our countryside. There was anger in certain houses. The military administration was criticized with a bitterness that was almost indignation. When I told my neighbors: 'Wait, it will all be explained; it wasn't done simply to annoy you,' they replied with the peculiar obstinacy of the countryman who is quite determined not to alter his opinion.

"On Saturday, the first of August, at five in the afternoon, the bell of the Catholic church of the neighboring village of St. Michel began to ring fast and loud. Men looked at one another with a constriction of the heart. Would this be the terrible news?

"They waited, not daring to speak. Two minutes perhaps elapsed. And people began to hope. But now the bell of the Protestant church also broke out into speech, mingling its discordant sounds with those of the other bell. Yet a glimmer of hope still remained to me. Who could tell? Perhaps a fire had broken out in the village! But no, there was no sign of smoke. It was war. It was indeed war. We were all gathered together, but we did not venture to look at one another. My son set out to obtain news from the nearest small town. The two bells did not cease ringing, as though they wanted to irritate the wound which their outburst had made in our hearts; and I gazed upon the vast horizon which is visible from my hermitage. The roads were as empty as before. 'Have not our peasants understood?' I thought, in anguish. But I soon saw that I had underrated them. The steam threshing-machines which were at work here and there all over the countryside were suddenly stopped. The workers, perched on the machines or on the stacks of

straw, were gazing about them in every direction. Then I saw one who raised his hands to the heavens in a lofty gesture which I had never seen them make. Was it in prayer? Or was it something else?

“Then the rhythmical gestures of the great work of harvest were resumed. The engines began to pant once more, but in a strange human silence. Yet all night long the work never ceased. They wanted to finish it; to finish at all costs, in order to leave bread for the women and children. Yet all through that historic night no signal was heard from the engines. Our humble country-fold instinctively avoided the use of that piercing call; orders were given by signs, or under the breath. Was there not in this insignificant detail a singularly poetical trait of moral delicacy? The voice of the tocsin, crying that the country was in danger, had imposed silence on all other voices.

“Towards seven o’clock I went down into the village. It was almost deserted. The Catholic curé, the Protestant pastor, and the schoolmaster had shaken hands with their friends. The mayor, assisted by a gendarme who had already come in from some neighboring district, was pasting up the order of requisition. In the few women to be seen one was conscious of a great oppression, but also of a degree of calmness and of discipline which I should never have believed possible. This tiny village of St. Michel de Chabrilanoux was the same as in 1870, yet what a contrast! It seemed to me that if what was happening there was no exception, France, if she was to perish, would at least perish beautifully.

“At the usual hour each withdrew to his room, but no one thought of sleeping. Each one passed the night by his window, dreaming and reflecting. At dawn the flock of sheep from the neighboring farm set out for the pasture, and in their monotonous procession along the track there was more than a beneficent symbol of the life that continues in spite of all.

“The bells did not ring that morning. Did they think to keep silence until the day when they should win pardon for having rung in the war by announcing a *Te Deum*?

“The two churches of the village were almost empty; and, what was better, so were the cabarets. The great day of mobilization for our district was Monday, the 3rd of August. On this Sunday there were a few isolated departures, but no one knew of them, and I did not see them. On the following day I was cowardly. I should have liked to return to the village, to press the departing soldiers to my heart. My courage failed me. Still obsessed by the memory of 1870, I feared, not scenes of emotion, but a display of distressing patriotism, cries of hatred, stupid boasts and threats, drinking songs alternating with and profaning our national anthems. I climbed a neighboring hill whence, with a pair of binoculars, one can plainly see what is happening on a number of the more important highways of the district. It was shortly after three o'clock that I first noticed, on the further side of a deep, narrow valley, something like a long, dark ribbon which seemed to move. Then suddenly the ‘*Marseillaise*’ burst forth, reverberated by all the echoes of the mountain, but there was something reserved and controlled about it; it had almost the accent of a psalm. Overcome by intense feeling, standing alone up there on the crest of the hill, I joined from afar in the song of our soldiers who were leaving for the front, until the moment when the turn of the road hid them from my sight.

“The sun shone out, and on all the other highways other interminable processions were descending toward the railway stations with the same order, with the slow, heavy pace of our peasants when they set out for the days of sowing.”¹

¹Paul Sabatier, “A Frenchman’s Thoughts on the War,” pp. 69-74.

2. THE WAR AS A PRACTICAL TASK

The War appealed to the race not only as a big, but also as a practical, task. It was practical in the ordinary sense in that it sought to satisfy certain primary and immediate needs. It was not an invasion of the Holy Land, to wrest the sepulcher of Christ out of the hands of the infidels. It was not a wild-goose chase throughout the world in search of the Holy Grail or the fountain of youth. Its interests were really vital to the happiness of the race. It sought to preserve such immediate values as physical life, property, honor, commercial advantage, and national security and independence. It was the salvation of many who were hitherto employed in non-essential industries — it gave them practical and essential jobs. It represented a task of building fleets, of making ammunition, of floating huge loans; of carrying relief to starving millions; of renewing vast wasted areas; of rehabilitating the immense human wreckage of war; of constructing bridges, cantonments, docks, and railroads; of raising, training, equipping, transporting, and feeding armies.

But still more important, the War was practical in that highest sense which is a characteristic of the ideal task, in that it directed itself to the satisfaction of a spiritual need to which the satisfaction of all other needs were subordinated. It was only as the War was waged in the interests chiefly of such spiritual values as justice, liberty, equality, truth, and democracy that it appealed to the best elements in mankind and proved itself a

practical task of the kind which the race needs. The appeal to the United States to take a hand in the struggle fell, so long as it was based upon the argument of a threatened national and personal security, upon inattentive ears; but when the appeal to self-interest was exchanged for the appeal to idealism, when the watchword "a world safe for democracy" was flung out, the nation, seizing upon this phrase as a battle-cry, sprang to arms. This change of appeal may have been, as many suspected, a ruse of the diplomats. It may be that some men, powerful in the life and decision of the nation, who publicly subscribed to this idealism actually were controlled by material interests. Many things which have been said and done since the signing of the armistice have lent support to such a suspicion. But consolation for the present and promise for the future is to be found in the really important fact that the War made its chief appeal to the *people* of the United States as a practical task, involving a controlling spiritual end — a world safe for democracy — and that the *people* of the United States will never be satisfied, that true peace will never be secured, until this spiritual end shall have been attained.

This conception of the War as being in the very highest sense a practical task is, of course, much wider than the United States. We will close our consideration of the point with a few words from a letter written August 1, 1914, by a young French school teacher:

"People should not keep on reminding me of 1870 *a propos* of 1914; the situation is so different! In 1870 many of the faults were on our side; our soldiers set out

courageously in defense of their country. This time they have set out with the conviction that they are serving their country, no doubt, but they are still more serving the most sacred rights of humanity. No one can doubt as to the possible or probable issue of the conflict. The match is too unequal. . . . The struggle was always unequal between the tyrants and the liberators; and the liberators, in the end, have always been the victors. I wish I were a poet, so that I could write, before setting out, a masterpiece dedicated to the Germans, thanking them for having brought back the age of the martyrs."¹

3. THE WAR A CONSTRUCTIVE TASK, BUT NEVERTHELESS ESSENTIALLY DESTRUCTIVE IN CHARACTER

A still more striking fact is that the War did, to some extent, fulfill also the requirement of a constructive task. It is true that one of the most serious defects of the War as a task for the race was its large and serious destructive element. It involved an enormous destruction of life and property. Thirteen millions dead, twenty millions crippled, one million homes destroyed, and three hundred and thirty-eight billions in direct and indirect money loss represent a few of the items which appear upon the debit side of the balance sheet. The formidable aspect which the War presents as a destructive agency has, in fact, caused many to feel certain that to justify the War on account of the good which resulted from it would be like praising a terribly destructive earthquake because it shook the ashes out of one's grate. Others are inclined to confine the great loss

¹Paul Sabatier, "A Frenchman's Thoughts on the War," p. 30.

strictly to material things and to discover a tremendous gain in spiritual values, and feel, consequently, just as certain that the ends gained entirely justify the cost. It is seriously to be questioned, however, whether a strict confinement of losses to material things and of gains to spiritual things is true to the facts of the case. However that may be, it remains that, no matter how large and invitingly the constructive results of the War loom up before us, few of us would desire a repetition of the experience.

Nevertheless, the constructive effects of the War are facts which must not be overlooked. War furnishes a great stimulus to life. Every interest of man feels its penetrating influence for good as well as for evil. It stirs art to new methods of interpretation and new modes of expression. To politics it bequeaths new codes of law, new forms of government, and new ideas of the relation of individual to individual, of individual to group, and of group to group. In the field of industry it gives birth to new mechanical inventions, new scientific discoveries, new systems of cooperation between employe and employer. Even religion, one of the most instinctive and conservative interests of man, is keenly sensitive to its presence. By war the concepts of religion are refilled, the principles of religion are reinterpreted, the hopes of religion are rekindled, the dogmas of religion are reconstructed, and the particular emphases of religion are renewed. War, in short, affords an opportunity for creating as well as for destroying. It was the creative element in the recent war that served as a powerful appeal

to many. More than one soldier could have voiced the sentiment of the writer of the same letter quoted above:

“I always used to picture to myself the atrocities of war, and now I see it as providing commonplace men like myself with the occasion, not so much of performing brilliant actions as of dying in creating something, of which I am certain, although I see it incompletely. To fall under some pine-tree in the Vosges, to die without any knowing of it, appears to me as an act of life which cannot be in vain. Perhaps they will kill us all. They will murder France. Yet I cannot help believing that we are already victorious.”¹

4. THE WAR A COOPERATIVE TASK, BUT NEVERTHELESS ESSENTIALLY COMPETITIVE IN CHARACTER

Furthermore, the War appealed to the race as a great opportunity for applying the cooperative principle. It compelled individuals to work side by side for the attainment of a common end. It took men from every walk of life, rich and poor, high and low born, educated and illiterate, of all creeds, classes, and colors, and dumped them into a common trench, fed them on a common fare, subjected them to a common discipline, gave them common routine tasks, and instilled into them a common ideal. The War was indeed a great breeder of the truly democratic spirit, the essence of which is the desire to work together in a common task.

It seems possible that even the Crown Prince of the nation which seemed to be least in sympathy with the democratic principle not only felt but may indeed have

¹Paul Sabatier, “A Frenchman’s Thoughts on the War,” p. 31.

been influenced by the cooperative, the potentially democratic, spirit which necessarily pervades camp life. In a recent interview he is reported to have made two statements which may possibly have had more than a casual connection. These two statements are:

“I quit the army with the greatest regret after having participated in the trench life with the soldiers for so long.”

“Should the German Government decide to form a republic similar to the United States or France, I should be perfectly content to return to Germany as a simple citizen ready to do anything to assist my country. I should even be happy to work as a laborer in a factory.”¹

To many persons these statements are merely the rantings of a superior hypocrite; but all who truly appreciate the tremendous power in cooperative labor to produce real unity and democracy must feel inclined to ascribe to these statements the possibility of an element of sincerity. The War actually appealed to large numbers of individuals as an opportunity for cooperative labor. It actually produced in others, who were drawn into the War by other appeals, a true feeling for and appreciation of the democratic, the cooperative, spirit.

What has been said of the relation of the War to individuals is true as well of its relation to the larger aggregations of individuals. The War produced not only a feeling of unity as between man and man, but also a closer bond between classes, races, sects, and nations. Even labor and capital, bitter rivals in the past, had their eyes opened to the truth of their real partnership. This

¹New York Times, Dec. 4, 1918.

fact has been manifested of late in a thousand ways, but nowhere more strikingly than in an industrial creed which, since the signing of the armistice, has been given to the world by one of its richest and most powerful industrial leaders. In practically all of the ten articles of which the creed is composed the idea of cooperation is present; in several, uppermost. In introducing the creed, its author, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., remarked:

“One of the most useful lessons which the struggle has taught is the value of cooperation. Today we stand at the threshold of the period of reconstruction, and as we turn from the problems of war to the problems of peace we may look for such success in solving the latter as has been attained in dealing with the former only as we are animated by the same spirit of cooperation and brotherhood. The hope of the future lies in the perpetuation of that spirit and its application to the grave problems which confront us nationally as well as internationally.”¹

It would be possible also to illustrate the War's influence upon the development of the idea of cooperation as between races. It is sufficient, however, to note that since the War started and gave men of every complexion—white, red, brown, yellow, and black—a common task, there has been much less emphasis upon racial peculiarities and inferiorities, and much more willingness, first, to recognize that each race has its peculiar contribution to make to world life and civilization, and second, to assist each race to make its peculiar contribution.

The inspiring way in which the various religions and religious sects have cooperated in performing a common

¹New York Times, Dec. 6, 1918.

personal service to the men in the armies and navies is, moreover, a striking and sufficient proof of the effect of the War in the field of religion. The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations are nothing other than great interdenominational Protestant institutions, and the wonderful service which they rendered during the War must be regarded as the result of the efficient and extensive cooperation of the various Protestant denominations. But cooperation was by no means limited to the Protestant churches. We witnessed, during the struggle, the inspiring sight of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant organizations cooperating in the raising of funds and in other activities. Furthermore, we have the Federal Council of Churches and the various other interchurch and interdenominational war-time commissions and organizations as evidences of the effect of the War in the development of cooperation in the religious field.

But it is probably in the national field that the power of the War to develop unity is most strikingly seen. Considerable had been done along the line of international cooperation before the War started. A cooperative spirit was present in the nations and longed for the opportunity to manifest itself more fully. The War provided an opportunity, and a pooling of resources, power, interests, and ideals followed which has been the wonder of the world. It was the spectacle of nation fighting beside nation, not the spectacle of nation fighting against nation, that appealed to mankind.

Shortly after the United States entered the War, the writer had the privilege of visiting Rio de Janeiro, and

while there of witnessing, even in that distant city, in a country so far removed from the actual theater of the War, a great demonstration in celebration of the entrance of the United States into the War. The joy of cooperating in a common task was indeed felt throughout the world.

In describing the joy of his little village over the news that England had joined France, Sabatier again illustrates a more general feeling.

“Suddenly on the fifth of August a messenger reached the little village, shouting: ‘England is coming in! England is coming in with us!’ Never have I seen so great a joy reflected on human faces. It did not find expression in shouting or processions, but when people were assured that the news was really authentic, those who were present gazed at one another without speaking; they all had tears in their eyes. Finally an old man said: ‘I feel that I can breathe again,’ and that phrase, in the local dialect, means that one can once more breathe freely, and that one feels once more that there is a reason for living.”¹

To the fact that the War operated so extensively and prominently to create a need for cooperation and to satisfy the desire for it is due in large part the present fateful tendency in some circles to eulogize war; but all who represent this attitude forget that the recent war, like all war, was a competitive, even more than a cooperative, task. The War did give birth to an active spirit of cooperation, but it was itself born of the spirit of competition. The War did invite men and nations to cooperate, but it invited them to cooperate in competing against

¹Paul Sabatier, “A Frenchman’s Thoughts on the War,” p. 35.

other men and nations. It temporarily satisfied the need of cooperation, but, at the same time, it radically violated the principle of cooperation. Consequently, the War must be interpreted as emphasizing both the great need of cooperation and its own inherent inadequacy to meet that need permanently and satisfactorily. The lesson which the War should teach us is that we must seek, not war as the satisfier of the need of cooperation, but cooperation as the permanent substitute for war. We should learn from this calamitous experience that war cannot be successfully eliminated, that true peace cannot be secured, unless men and nations be induced to cooperate in the performance of great definite constructive services.

Is this the clue which is being followed in the present search after a substitute for war? We often hear it said, for instance, that the recent war was a war against war, and that the League of Nations is the substitute which is to take the place of war; but if the principle which we have laid down is correct, it is plain that by no stretch of the imagination can the League of Nations, as provided for in the present covenant, be regarded as a real substitute for war. The League of Nations can be regarded as a substitute for war only in so far as war is a means of settling disputes. The covenant of the League provides for recourse to arbitration rather than war as a mode of settling disputes; but war, as we have seen, represents something more than a mode of settling disputes. War is not so much a mode of settling disputes as it is a way of giving expression to certain natural instincts and of satisfying certain fundamental needs, namely the fighting

instinct and the need of cooperation. The League of Nations seeks to prevent war by providing other means for settling disputes, but it fails to provide any other definite way of giving expression to this instinct and of satisfying this need. It provides the world with a new tool, but it outlines for the nations no definite, constructive, cooperative task. It cannot, therefore, be regarded as representing or providing a substitute for war.

“All our hopes of saving the world from a repetition of the unfathomable cataclysm of 1914,” writes Premier Lloyd George in the *Manchester Guardian*, “center upon our working out the principal means whereby the nations of the earth can conduct the common affairs of the world in friendly cooperation instead of jealous rivalry. The principle of the League of Nations has been accepted, but the League of Nations will prove fruitless if it is to be no more than a new piece of international organization. What matters is that the units which make up this organization shall be inspired by a real determination to work in close harmony together for the betterment and liberty of mankind. The nations must not let themselves believe that, having drawn up a paper constitution, the peace of the world has been made secure. If they allow themselves to be bemused by this policy they will only be reawakened by a new war. They have now to see that the League of Nations is made the effective instrument for the solution of every international problem.”

When I take my boys' club out to play baseball and a dispute over some matter arises, I do not blow my whistle, call the boys around me, and start to adjudicate the matter. No, I blow my whistle for attention and cry: “Play ball! Play ball!” I find that disagreements are

most often only magnified by making them the subjects of discussion and arbitration — that they are best prevented, settled, and forgotten by keeping the boys continually playing together. The covenant of the League of Nations, however, seems to provide an umpire who promises to be much more efficient in fining players and suspending them from the game than in crying, "Play ball!"

All of this, of course, is to criticize the League of Nations, not because it goes too far, but because it does not go far enough. The saddest thing about the present situation is that most of the criticisms which are voiced are from the opposite point of view. All of us, of course, would rather see a game which is presided over by an umpire who freely fines and suspends than one which tends to degenerate into a free-for-all fight. My whole point is that some of us prefer a game which contains neither of these characteristics. Perhaps it was impossible for the framers of this covenant to go further than they did in the way of providing a real substitute for war, but, however this may be, it is certainly incumbent upon us to recognize clearly the limitations of the present plan and not to make the serious mistake of regarding the League of Nations in this form as in itself a substitute for war. At best, the League will merely make it more difficult for the great work of the various international agencies — commercial, financial, agricultural, industrial, religious, and educational — which operate powerfully to develop feelings of solidarity, to be interrupted by war. It is these cooperative agencies of a non-governmental character which are doing the most to produce unity

and to make war more and more impossible. The League of Nations will merely help them in this work in a more or less negative way. We shall probably be required to wait a while longer before the governments of the world themselves will be willing to join these non-governmental agencies in the great work of fostering international cooperation and unity — before they will be willing to cooperate extensively, not only in creating tools for their common use, but in performing definite constructive tasks, common cooperative services.

The War was a war against war, but war can never destroy war. The League of Nations is a means to prevent war, but the covenant of the League of Nations provides no real substitute for war. The only real substitute for war is cooperation. Only when it is recognized that international contacts are opportunities for cooperation as well as causes of conflict, and only as these contacts are greatly extended and increased in the interests of cooperation, will the discord and sorrow and waste of war be supplanted by the harmony, the joy, and the productivity of cooperative service.

The War, viewed as a whole, had in it a decided competitive element which was entirely out of harmony with the true cooperative spirit. But here again, side by side with this great weakness which needs no emphasis, we find a lofty virtue. The War was a great collective occupation, which at once satisfied a widespread desire for an opportunity to apply the cooperative principle and developed in every department of life a more vivid sense of unity.

5. THE WAR AS A TASK FOR THE TASK'S SAKE: INVOLVING A TREMENDOUS RISK OF SELF, A SACRIFICIAL SERVICE OF OTHERS, AND ABUNDANT JOY

The great experience of the War emphasized the fact that the need of a task which can be undertaken for its own sake is felt keenly by the present age. The War was a task which by its very nature excluded selfishness. There was little room in the service for self-seekers. The men whose highest thoughts were of their fortunes and their hides naturally collected into a class of slackers. So fully was this the case, in fact, that suspicion of selfishness fell to some extent upon all who were not actively and directly engaged in war work. Even the few men who held themselves aloof from the War for the very highest and best of reasons were often quite naturally suspected of being self-seekers. The War was a task which called for an unusually large element of personal risk, and it was this characteristic which, as much as any other, appealed to this unselfish age.

Of course, selfishness of some kinds found its way into war activities. There was a certain amount of seeking after personal glory, fame, and adventure. The principal appeal of war work for some men was undoubtedly that it provided a better living than they could obtain elsewhere. Some really selfish, nevertheless undertook war work because of fear of public opinion. Traces of selfishness, of seeking after advantages of one kind and another, are no doubt to be found in the nations which were engaged in the War as well as in the individuals. But it must be said that, on the whole, the War appealed to the race as an

altruistic job. It was a task which made a supreme test of man's capacity to forget himself in serving others. Eliminating all gross individualism, it allowed only for that higher quality which we have called personalism — that is, the consciousness of the tremendous moral effects which an individual's work of sacrificial service wrought in himself as a member of the race.

But the War called forth something higher than personalism. It required that consciousness dwell not so much upon the effects wrought in the individuals who served as upon the effects wrought in those who were served, and in them not so much as individuals as members of the race. The War provided an opportunity for sacrificial service, not only of one's country, not only of groups outside of one's own country which were oppressed with particular severity, not only of a cause which embraced many nations, but of a cause which bore vitally upon humanity as a whole. Thus, to a degree never before experienced by the world, the War met an acutely felt need for an opportunity to work as never before in the interests of the race.

An incident which is reported to have occurred upon the occasion of the arrival at a French port of the first transports carrying American troops splendidly illustrates this spirit and the consciousness of altruism which the War promoted. An observer has described the arrival of these ships by saying:

“One by one they slid up the channel, passing near us as they made a turn that brought them close to shore. The beach was dotted with delighted French people. On

the low wall of a garden that sloped down from the villa near which we had stopped, a French girl was standing. She was, perhaps, sixteen, and she held an American flag that waved over her head and threatened to lift her from the wall as the breeze caught its brilliant folds. A ship passed close in, and she waved the flag with all her strength. On the crowded deck of the transport the troops waved in return. Another ship passed, and again she waved the flag. Again the crowded decks answered. And then, steaming sedately up the channel, came one of the former German liners, once named for a member of the royal house of Hohenzollern. Its decks were crowded with three thousand men. The rigging was filled with them. The rails were lined. Every inch of the ship's enormous length seemed alive with men in khaki and sailors in blue. The girl on the wall seized her flag with renewed vigor, and waved it madly. We expected to see the same answer the other ships had given, but instead, as I trained my glasses on the bridge, I saw an officer seize a megaphone. The gold on his sleeve glistened in the sun as he spoke to the men below him. The distance was too great for us to hear his words, but a moment later the ship seemed swayed by a common impulse. Every hat waved in the air for an instant, waved again — and again. Then over the glistening water came three mighty cheers.

“The girl stood amazed. For a moment she failed to grasp it all, and finally it dawned on her that they had returned her greeting — that the spirit of America had answered that of France. She seized her flag, and waved it until it snapped in the breeze. Then, overcome by her emotions, she jumped from the wall, and threw her arms about the neck of a little woman in black who was standing there.

“*Chere mère,*” she cried, *‘ils sont venus pour la France.’*”¹

¹Daniel Hawthorne, *World's Work*, Dec., 1917, p. 187.

Work for work's sake as we have described it, however, is something which transcends altruism. It requires that supreme emphasis be placed not upon the effects, moral or otherwise, which result from work — unless these effects are interpreted also to include the great joy which accompanies the performance of highly moral acts — but upon the doing of the work itself. The most real effects of work, as we have already seen, are the increase of the capacity for work and the joy which accompanies the performance of the work. The retention of these effects is conditioned upon the continuance and increase of moral activity. It is activity, therefore, or at most the joy of service and the capacity for service which directly accompanies it, which is eternal. It is moral activity which is at once the means of salvation and salvation itself, existence and the supreme end of existence. It is salvation in this sense, which results from work for work's sake, that the age demands.

That the War temporarily met this supreme desire of the race is quite evident from the great joy which filled the hearts of all who caught and manifested in their service the real spirit of the task which the War provided. The fact is patent that the activities and sacrifices called for by the War filled the world with a depth of religious fervor and joy which it had never before experienced. The War, indeed, was one of the greatest religious experiences of the race.

In writing, not of the War as a whole, but merely of its beginning, Sabatier says:

“The manner in which the people of France accepted her decision on the evening of the 1st of August 1914 and

the following night — and when I say the people, that is exactly the word I mean to use, and no other: the common people, the agricultural population of our country-sides and the working population of our towns — amounted to the collective accomplishment of a religious act which was perhaps the grandest and the most definite of history since that tragic night when the Son of Man, beneath the olives of Gethsemane, complied with the will of His Heavenly Father. And this is what gives our national hymns, when they break forth on the battlefield, a beauty and a wealth of meaning which we never knew was theirs. They express our love of our native soil, but above all they sing the ideal truths which we had too long forgotten, the joy of sacrifice for others, the joy of giving one's life for the truth, the joy of making death a source of life.

“The war has brought sorrows unspeakable to all our homes, but we should be short-sighted indeed did we fail to perceive that it also has brought with it an immense cause for joy: suddenly, irresistibly, it brought us to a standstill, and, wresting us from all our egotistical cares, our daily anxieties, our trivial pleasures, our pitiful discussions, it set before us duties, responsibilities, and sacrifices such as no generation of the past was ever confronted with.

“This terrible summons, addressed to France first of all — was it not a supreme honour for the whole nation; was it not like a sign of election? France understood its meaning, and individual sorrows were swallowed up in the joy of the nation, that it was once again in her power to do great things, to resume her historic mission, to affirm her ideal.”¹

The War, since it so thoroughly satisfied the various other requirements of the ideal task for the race, made it

¹Paul Sabatier, “A Frenchman's Thoughts on the War,” pp. 98-100.

possible for men and nations to prosecute it joyfully, as a task pursued for its own sake.

6. THE WAR AS A TEMPORARY TASK: THE PROBLEM OF PEACE

It may have been noted that, in speaking above of the War's satisfaction of the need of a task which can be undertaken for its own sake, I characterized this satisfaction as temporary. This serious limitation needs now to be emphasized and to be extended to each of the other requirements which we have been considering. We have pointed out, in analyzing the kind of a task that the age needs, that the ideal task must of necessity be eternal. If salvation is moral activity, then, if salvation is to be an abiding possession of the individual and the race, the individual and the race must be eternally active. If the individual is to be assured of eternal salvation, he must be assured that the task to which he devotes himself wholeheartedly in this life is one to which he will be able to devote himself eternally in the life beyond. If the race is to feel assured of eternal salvation — and it will not be content with less — the task which will challenge its best efforts must, in addition to other things, give promise of never playing out. The final demand of the age is for an eternal task.

This demand for an eternal task the War failed utterly to meet. It lasted four short years, and then it ended. It not only did end; it had to end, for, despite the fact that for the time being it met the needs of the race better than any other single and definite task which the race has yet

confronted, it embodied destructive and competitive elements which rendered it seriously unfit to be the permanent task of humanity. These serious weaknesses were pointed out above. They could, but need not, be illustrated and emphasized here, for the fact remains that, whatever the causes, the War has come to a close, and the salvation which it brought as a task which could be pursued for its own sake has been lost.

I say "has been lost," but this is only partly true. It is true in the sense that the deep religious joy, which filled the hearts of those who found in the War a supreme opportunity for unlimited service of the kind which we have described, has fled. Who would think, for instance, of comparing the spirit which was widely manifested in our peace celebrations with the spirit which greeted the coming of the War? What a vast difference between Sabatier's description of the latter and our newspaper accounts of the former! Nor is the fault the reporters'. Could even a Sabatier have made the reports of the peace celebrations more inspiring and been true to the facts? No, a world sobered by war was made drunken by the news of peace.

At any rate, we call this peace, and peace is a thing to be desired and admired; but if this is peace — this unhappy state of unemployment, this renewed interest in trivial pleasures, this dimmed consciousness of capacity for service, this loss of true spiritual perspective, this diminution of the creative impulse, this slipping back into petty rivalries and jealousies, this recalling of forgotten injuries, this resurrection of egotistical cares and

personal anxieties — if this is peace, say all deeply thoughtful and truly religious men, give us war! But better yet, give us a task which will measure up more fully than the War to the ideal which the race has set for itself.

If some of us were sober in the midst of the peace celebrations, it was not because we were sad that the War had come to an end. It was because we were conscious of the fact that the winning of the War was but the beginning of a much greater task which had yet to be accomplished, and because we felt that the manner of the peace celebrations smacked too much, therefore, of the boasting of one who puts the armor on rather than off. We were sober because we realized that, as compared with the War, the age, now more than ever, needs a task more vast, more truly practical, more exclusively constructive, more thoroughly cooperative, more worthy of being made the end of existence, eternal. Give it such a task and you will not only restore to it the surpassing joy of work for work's sake which has already fled, but will preserve for it the tremendous capacity for unselfish moral activity which still lingers. If we procrastinate until this capacity too has fled, the War will have been fought in vain, and salvation in its fullest sense will have to be secured again.

The supreme need of the age is the need of a task. That this need is acutely felt by the age is proved by various evidences, but by no more conclusive piece of evidence than that furnished by the appeal which the War, imperfect as it was as a representation of the ideal task, made to the world. It stands to reason that, by meeting this need partly but only temporarily, the War merely

aggravated the sense of need. The War, in truth, must be regarded not as the satisfier, but as the discoverer, of this need. Now, far more than ever before, is the need felt acutely. A more perfect satisfaction is eagerly desired. Is there any source from which the age may reasonably expect this more perfect satisfaction to come? If so, where is that source?

CHAPTER IV

THE NEED SATISFIED: THE NEED AND THE CHRISTIAN TASK OF ESTABLISHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

The answer to the question as to where the age must look for the satisfaction of its supreme need of a task is "Christianity." Nor is this the answer of one individual only. It is the answer of every true follower of Christ. Neither is this the answer of sincere but possibly overzealous faith. It is an answer which finds its justification in a long tradition, in a wide experience, in an unfettered reason. It surely is not an answer for which the reader was entirely unprepared. He must have repeatedly read it between the lines of the preceding discussion. The need, it was said, is for activity, and not merely activity, but moral activity of the very highest form. This is just what religion, in its truest manifestations, is. If life is activity, religion is activity at its best and fullest.

In emphasizing this very point, Sabatier gives us a splendid description of religion at its best in stating that "religion comprises. . . . three series of facts: firstly, the intuition of a personal and social ideal above the present reality; secondly, a movement of our whole being, physical as well as moral, towards that ideal, as well as the whole of our efforts to realize it; finally, the act of faith by which, when we have affirmed the ideal, when we feel that we are made for it, we also feel, despite all obstacles, that we are capable of attaining it: the act of faith which, plainly perceiving the difficulties, leaves to reason the task of studying them, and regards itself as

certain of victory; if it must be, after many defeats, and even through every sacrifice.”¹

It is the element of highest moral activity which is most prominent in this description of religion at its best. It is just this that the age needs most. Consequently, I say that it must have been evident to the reader that the only answer to the question which we have stated which could prove finally satisfactory to the age had to be of necessity the answer “religion,” and not merely the answer “religion,” but, as the religion which most completely fulfills this requirement of the ideal religion, the answer “Christianity.” It should be noted that Christianity is put forward, not as the only, but as the best answer to the question. This answer, we say, was implicit in the entire preceding discussion. We shall now endeavor to make it explicit by showing how Christianity best meets the supreme need of the age — the need which, although more acutely felt today than ever before, is as old as religion itself — the need of a task of the kind which we have described.

Christianity best meets the supreme need of the age by inviting the race as a whole to join in the performance of the greatest of all tasks, of which it is customary to speak in traditional and theological language as “the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.” This was the task which challenged the unlimited enthusiasm and unswerving allegiance, which commanded the superior and unstinted services, of the founder of Christianity. This was the task toward which he was yearning even

¹Paul Sabatier, “A Frenchman’s Thoughts on the War,” p. 96.

as a lad, when he announced to his wondering parents that he must be about his Father's business. This was the great social ideal in the interests of which Jesus lived, worked, and died. It was by no means an ideal which was original with Jesus, but it was an ideal which he saw most clearly and represented a task the need of which he felt most acutely. He handed down his superior conception of the ideal task to his followers. Just to the extent to which they have been true Christians, Jesus' ideal of the kingdom has been central in their lives. Its appeal to men of the present age is especially strong.

The ideal of the kingdom has been described correctly and beautifully as follows:

"The Gospel of Christianity is that of the kingdom of God. It takes for granted the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the infinite worth of the individual human soul. To the sinful it offers forgiveness; to the weak, strength; to the sorrowing, comfort; and to all, the opportunity of brotherly service and sacrifice. It seeks to organize mankind into a spiritual society, independent of race, nationality, education, or class; in which love shall be the bond of union, and humility the test of greatness. But, unlike purely ethical systems, it finds its motive power in the redemptive love of the good God, who has given his Son to be the Saviour of the world, and whose fatherly purpose and character Jesus reveals. While it postpones the complete realization of the kingdom to the future, it affirms that it is present here and now; and that entrance to it is possible to all who through penitence and faith accept the gracious invitation of the Master, and, denying themselves, take up their cross and follow him."¹

¹William Adams Brown "Christian Theology in Outline," pp. 37, 38.

The task of organizing mankind into the society described above is what Christianity offers the race. That the race can do no better than to accept this task will be seen more clearly as we proceed to point out the superior way in which this task meets the several requirements of the ideal task which we have already discussed in the two preceding chapters.

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM AS A BIG TASK: A CALL TO MESSIAHSHIP

There is no need of emphasizing the fact that the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth meets the first requirement of the ideal task. It is a big and a difficult task that Christianity offers. So big and difficult is it, in fact, that one of the principal grounds of antagonism to Christianity has always been its large element of ambition and presumption.

Concerning the place of this element of presumption in Christianity, Professor William Ernest Hocking has written:

“In truth, ambition is the essence of religion. . . . If religion destroys ambition, it destroys itself. The solution of Christianity perceives this principle. . . . Ambition . . . is the most characteristic product of Christianity in the field of behavior. It is the passion for the historic spread of the new community, or in more personal form, the ‘passion for souls.’ Nothing is more dominant in the early history of this cult than the willingness to suffer, to be despised, to endure all things, if by any means some could be persuaded to become members of the community, the kingdom of heaven in the guise of a militant church on earth.

“The community with which it (the passion for souls) concerns itself is never merely an invisible church of all the loyal, such as Professor Royce had in mind as the ‘beloved community.’ It is this; but it is also an institution among institutions, having its own work in the world and its own aims. It is among other institutions somewhat as the State is among them, while in its purposes it includes them and reflects upon all of them. Its purpose is to hold out precisely this interpretation of their wills to all men as being the adequate interpretation; to bring all plans and goods into subordination to this; and thus, while nominally undermining all other institutions, to pave the way for the most subtle of common understandings, the interracial and international understandings which are crystallizing in the shape of a world culture and an international law. Thus Christianity becomes a corporate body having an ambition of its own: it becomes a propaganda, breaks across the provincial boundaries of its origin, and aspires to universality. Like Buddhism, it is by its own principle a missionary religion. And if by being ‘true’ we mean among other things being awake to the nature of one’s business in this world, we may say that no religion is a true religion which does not in this way aspire to be corporate and universal.”

“Original Christianity,” writes Prof. Hocking in another connection, “encountered precisely the same criticism of its aims, namely, that they are presumptuous. Was it not this very charge that led to the crucifixion, and from the point of view of the judges perhaps justly so? For did not this man profess to forgive sins, and in other ways make himself equal with God? And did he not hand over the keys of heaven and hell to his followers? He professed to save others, and it was a pointed gibe, regarded as equivalent to a refutation, that he could not save himself. In political translation, the offense of the man was in his pretended kingship, the true substance of

which was his self-asserted mastery over the souls of men. Historically speaking, the crux of Christianity is its element of presumption.”¹

The Christian task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth is indeed ambitious. Many faint hearts, in merely contemplating the task, have been filled with despair. Strong hearts, however, have been made to exult. The best men of the race have deemed the task worthy of their best thought, their most earnest prayers, their most efficient services. The task is so big that, in spite of two millenniums of aspiration and work, the kingdom of God is still far more future than present. It is a mustard seed which has barely begun to germinate, and which has yet to grow into a great plant.

When we once conceive of the bigness of the task of establishing God's rule over the world, we can no longer be surprised that some men have felt themselves forced to regard the task as one which God alone can accomplish — as one in the accomplishment of which the efforts of man are of no avail. This is especially true of our attitude toward those, such as the apocalyptists, who regarded the kingdom as entirely future but nevertheless at hand. If we believed either that the present state of affairs is all wrong or that the ideal state of affairs will be established in entirety in a short time, we should be forced to recognize that the task is suitable for God alone. Most of the men who have held the latter view have held both of the former beliefs. Holding these two beliefs,

¹William Ernest Hocking, "Human Nature and Its Remaking," pp. 377-381.

and being conscious of the bigness of the task, they could scarcely miss drawing the conclusion they drew.

Even without the burden of either of these two beliefs, the bigness of the task is for us a real difficulty, which we cannot entirely overcome by resolving the process by which it is to be accomplished into a gradual, endless evolution. We find it necessary to assign to God a large share of the work. We take to ourselves only what we can handle. Both God and man are essential to the accomplishment of the task.

The truly remarkable thing about Jesus' view of the task is that, having cast aside the pessimistic view of the present, but still holding to the view that the ideal state of affairs was to be ushered in in its entirety in the very near future, he nevertheless found it possible to assign to man an essential part of the work of bringing in the kingdom. The idea of men's helping to bring in the kingdom was entirely foreign to the thought of Jesus' time. God's special representative, the Messiah, alone could perform this gigantic task. All that ordinary men could do was to prepare themselves for the coming of the kingdom, and this preparation involved matters altogether foreign to the work of establishing the kingdom. Our idea that men can prepare themselves for the kingdom only by working to establish it in the world was not present in the thought of Jesus' time; but it was present in Jesus' thought.

In the light of this fact, may it not have been Jesus' acute consciousness of the need of engaging himself in the really big task of bringing in the kingdom and of thus

preparing himself for its coming that finally led him to lay claim to be the Messiah, or at least led his followers to make this claim concerning him? However, no matter what the nature and source of the claim, it is a fact that cannot be denied that Jesus actually did take a large part of the Messiah's work upon himself, and that he actually did make lesser messiahs out of every man whom he called to be his follower. Jesus called men from the little tasks of catching fish and of collecting taxes for the great Roman Empire to the big tasks of catching men and of working for the establishment of God's kingdom. Jesus called men not only to repentance, but to the big task of establishing God's rule over all men, to the practical task of doing God's will, of going about doing good. It was a task worthy of man's sense of infinite capability. It is a task than which no other yet conceived by man can better meet the supreme need of the age.

2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM AS A PRACTICAL TASK: JESUS THE SERVANT OF EVERY NEED, A NEGLECTED IDEAL

We have already indicated that the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth satisfies the added requirement of a practical task. The practical element has been prominent in all ideas of the kingdom itself. The kingdom has always been thought of as the ideal state in which every need of man, physical, mental, moral, and industrial but, in a special sense, every spiritual need of man — has been met. The general tendency of thought about the kingdom has been to recognize both the necessarily close

connection between all of man's needs and the special importance of his spiritual needs — a dual recognition which we have previously characterized as being of the essence of the truly practical attitude. If at times thought about the kingdom has tended to emphasize spiritual needs, not merely to the subordination but to the exclusion of other needs, the fault has been due to the practical interest in overcoming the persistent refusal of man to rise above the consciousness of his primary needs to a keen sense of his ultimate spiritual needs.

This fault, however, has displayed itself not so much in thought concerning the kingdom itself as in thought concerning the work of establishing the kingdom. In thought about the kingdom itself the practical element has been very prominent, but in thought about the work of establishing the kingdom the practical element has often been lacking. When this work has been assigned entirely to God or to his special representative, the Messiah, the work has assumed a supernatural rather than a practical character. Even when man has been given a share in this work, his activity has often been interpreted as too exclusively spiritual rather than practical.

This over-emphasis of the exclusively spiritual element, however, has not been true of the best thought concerning the work of establishing the kingdom. Jesus, for instance, at a time when to do so was to risk his life, not only gave men a share in the work of bringing in the kingdom but interpreted this work as being very practical. He called men to a repentance which involved a change of attitude not only toward God, but toward their neighbors

who were to work with them in the fuller establishment of the kingdom which, in part, was already present.

Jesus was most considerate of man's primary needs. He fed men. He healed men. He taught men. He gave men work. He, like the present age, preferred saying, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk" to saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." And yet he clearly recognized that this service of the primary needs was merely preliminary — that behind these primary needs there lay deeper and more important spiritual needs, which men must satisfy for themselves by undertaking to serve others. Jesus conditioned entrance into the kingdom of heaven upon the efficient and sacrificial service of all of the needs of men. He recognized that the joy of the kingdom, which accompanies the fullest satisfaction of spiritual needs, comes only to those who take up their crosses and follow him — to those, in other words, who join wholeheartedly in the very practical work of establishing God's kingdom on earth.

Jesus' emphasis upon the practical nature of the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth has always been true of Christianity at its best; but it is here that Christianity has failed seriously to measure up to its ideal. In the course of a severe but fair arraignment of the Church because of her lack of interest in matters of practical social reform, a recent writer remarks:

"Up till now . . . the very reformers who arose within the Church have worked all through their lives with a sad sense upon them that the Church as a whole was not with them, and that if only the Church were fully awakened

victory complete and full would be an easy thing. The Church has been very busy indeed at times, making sure that her own rights were respected. She has been also very busy in controversy, and in the conflicts which arise from ecclesiastical differences. She has cared a great deal about her buildings, and her ritual, and her internal organization. She has even done great things in the realm of scholarship. But to the average man it seems as if the great practical tasks that confront her at her very doors have on the whole been neglected. And the result is that the average man feels that the Church cares very much about things which do not interest him, and very little about the wrongs and injustices under which he labors year after year.

“The Church has often made things very much worse in this connection, by asserting that these practical questions which engross our poorer brethren are after all materialistic. She has thus often implied that it is no part of her business to be concerned about them. Sentiments of that kind are very popular among certain well-nourished gentlemen who wear expensive clothes, and they are not altogether in disrepute among ministers with large stipends. The ones with small stipends know only too well that it is quite impossible to separate the question of a man’s material condition from the question of his spiritual health. And the poor men of the country know that with bitter certainty. They rebel against their lot just because the spirit that is within them is hungry for a larger life — because they want, to begin with, to be able to have healthy bodies — because they want to be able to express their parental love by giving their children a healthy upbringing and the good start in life which comes from good nourishment and a sound education — because they want to get out from under the burden of anxiety that weighs them down, and to have free minds for truth, beauty, and worship, and free hearts for love and friendship. The poor

man in a modern city is a man always fighting forces that threaten his life: he lives a narrow life amidst uncertainties which rob him of rest: he *has* to be constantly thinking about money. In such circumstances the mind does not have a chance to exert its full power and the soul is embarrassed. The discipline of a fight with poverty has proved a splendid thing for many a man in his youth. But nobody who has had to live through life in constant anxiety about the necessary means of life has any doubt about it that poverty of that type and degree is essentially depressing.

“Our depressed poor are tragically clear about it, and any institution that seems to them to deny it necessarily arouses their hostility. A church that would claim to care about their souls while utterly indifferent to the state of their bodies would seem to them simply a silly church, that was not taking account of the plain truth about this incarnate life of ours.

“And thus it has come to pass that the mass of the people in our country really do remain in doubt as to whether the Church really cares about them. A few roundly assert that she does not. The majority think it an open question. At the best, the Church is under suspicion.”¹

Of course, other religions than Christianity and other institutions besides the Christian Church have failed even more seriously to be truly practical. It is scarcely to be doubted that not only the ideal but the actual practice of Christianity in this regard has far transcended anything which we find to exist, either potentially or actually, in other religions. But a clear recognition of this fact ought not to hinder Christians from resolving that hereafter their practice shall better represent the Christian ideal.

¹A. Herbert Gray, “As Tommy Sees Us,” pp. 106-8.

Unless this serious discrepancy between the ideal and the practice of Christianity is overcome, the Christian task of establishing God's dominion over men will not appeal to the age with its full force. Christianity, organized and unorganized, must not only associate itself with, but assume the leadership in, every movement for economic, educational, political, industrial, and spiritual reform which seeks to satisfy better all of the needs of man. Conceived in its truest manifestations, the task to which Christianity calls the race satisfies the need of the age for a practical task supremely well.

3. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM AS A CONSTRUCTIVE TASK: CATASTROPHE, A DANGEROUS SURVIVAL: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

What we have said about the manner in which Christianity, in offering to the race the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth, satisfies the need of the age for a practical task applies also to the manner in which Christianity satisfies the need of the age for a constructive task. A discrepancy between the ideal state which is desired and the work of establishing it, similar to that which was discovered in the preceding connection, is present here as well. There we discovered that thought about the kingdom itself was always consistent in regarding it as a place where the practical attitude controlled, but that thought about the work of establishing the kingdom often tended to become impractical. In the present connection we find that the kingdom has always been regarded as a place where there shall be no more catastrophe — as a

place from which murders and earthquakes and fire and floods and famines and droughts and wars shall be entirely eliminated. But, on the other hand, the work of establishing the kingdom has often been closely associated with these very things which we have mentioned. Especially when this work has been assigned entirely to God, when the view of the present has been entirely pessimistic and the view of the immediate future has been extremely optimistic, has this catastrophic and destructive emphasis been present. The present state of affairs is altogether bad. The ideal state of affairs is about to be established. The emphasis was naturally and, although not necessarily so, almost exclusively upon God's destructive wrath, which was to be given vent to in an abundance and variety of destructive acts.

But Jesus found the materials of the future in the present. And, although he seems to have thought that the kingdom was to be established in its fulness in the near future, he does not seem to have employed the idea of God's condemning and destroying activity. As we have seen, he made the work of bringing in the kingdom a work for both God and man, but it was in the nature of man's work that he was most interested. We are left to surmise what may have been his conception of the nature of God's work. The task which Jesus himself undertook and to which he called others was clearly a constructive task. Jesus compared the kingdom not to a gigantic mine, but to a mustard seed planted in the earth; not to a bomb, but to a piece of leaven. He told Peter to put up his sword. His summons was to a work of constructive service.

In every sense, he came not to destroy but to transform.

Perhaps it was not so much Jesus' assumption of the work of the Messiah, as it was his refusal to perform this work in the manner in which it was generally thought that the Messiah would perform it, that proved obnoxious to the men of his time. Some of Jesus' contemporaries looked for an earthly Son of David, who would establish his rule over the earth by physical force. Others looked for a supernatural Son of Man, who would establish God's rule throughout the world by a miraculous display of destructive power. Jesus, however, conscientiously objected to playing either of these roles. He chose rather to be the Suffering Servant of the race. Jesus won the disfavor of the men of his time by refusing to apply the destructive principle in his work of bringing in the kingdom. Is it not a sad commentary on the present state of affairs that organized Christianity so often tends to win the disfavor of the present age because of its too great sympathy with the destructive principle — because of its failure to emphasize and to require the thorough application of the constructive principle?

The present age, especially since the experience of the Great War, demands a task which will require the exclusive application of the constructive principle. We have seen that war embodies a decidedly constructive element, but that this exists by the side of a decidedly destructive element which renders war entirely unsatisfactory as the permanent task for the race. War is an evil from which, as we have already had occasion to point out, much good

comes, but it is by no means a necessary evil. It is an evil which, like every other evil, must be entirely eliminated.

The experience of the race proves, moreover, that even evil cannot be eliminated by the process of destruction. It is not to be fought either by the sword of steel or the sword of truth. It can be successfully overcome only by rescuing the forces which have begun to run in the channels of evil and by directing them into the channels of good. Life is the necessity of activity. As long as man is alive he must do something. If we do not supply the active child with something good to do, he will soon be in mischief. And once he has fallen into mischief, the only proper and constructive way to rescue him from it is not to deny him the pleasure and good which he is actually getting out of his mischief, but to promise him a greater pleasure and good to be derived from some other definite task which you actually offer to him.

If Adam was placed in the garden of Eden without any definite, constructive task, it is no wonder that he fell, for evil lurks in every garden of leisure. But it was a fall from a state of passionless inactivity into a state where it was possible for him to be either temporarily and partly happy in his works of evil or permanently and wholly happy in his works of good. This choice became his, and whichever he chose, he must have been conscious of the fact that he had passed from hell into heaven, for the difference between the state of leisure, which is as near the boundary of inactivity and passionlessness as man can get and still live, and the state of active evil—like the difference

between this state of active evil and the state of active good—is the difference between hell and heaven.

It might have been some such distinction as this that Jesus had in mind when he said, “I came not to bring peace, but a sword.” At least, we have already agreed that between peace of a certain type and war of a certain type the vote must be cast unanimously for war.

But this choice between the idle and the active life is not the only choice that man has. It has been God’s eternal purpose to make it more and more necessary for man to choose rightly between the life of active evil and the life of active good, and he has sought to do this, not by the negative and destructive method of denying man the freedom of doing evil, but by the positive and constructive method of offering man a part in the great task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Just to the extent that men catch the force and understand the full significance of this appeal, will they find it necessary to abandon their evil actions and to choose the constructive work of righteousness. Not until we recognize the necessity of taking this exclusively positive and constructive attitude, not only toward our special task of eliminating evil from the world but toward our general task of establishing God’s kingdom on earth, can we hope to be entirely successful.

We often hear it said nowadays that thought about the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth must allow for an element of catastrophe. If it is meant that catastrophe is necessary to the successful carrying on of

this work, we must disagree, for a method which involves destructive as well as constructive elements cannot for a moment be regarded as necessary to the establishment of a society in which the constructive principle is to rule supreme. However, if it is meant that catastrophe has contributed and can yet contribute to the promotion of the kingdom, we agree. But we find it necessary to go beyond this agreement and to assert that, since catastrophe subtracts from as well as contributes to the establishment of the kingdom, it must, as far as is possible, be eliminated as a factor in that work. War and evil of all kinds must be eliminated, and eliminated by a positive and constructive method. The method of destruction is an imperfect method which must be avoided as far as possible. The constructive principle alone must be consciously and deliberately applied in the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Only as it is so applied will the offer of Christianity appeal to an age which throbs with the creative impulse.

4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM AS A CO-OPERATIVE TASK: THE CHURCH A FELLOWSHIP OF WORKERS, AN UNREALIZED IDEAL

The Christian task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth meets the need of a cooperative task also. In a surpassingly complete way this work satisfies the instinctive longing of the age for a task in the performance of which men can work side by side. It not only makes cooperation possible; it requires it, and thus it not only satisfies the need for companionship where this need is

already felt, but both creates and satisfies the need where the consciousness of it was not previously acute.

The work of bringing in the kingdom of God requires cooperation by the very fact of its bigness. No man could ever think of himself as able to accomplish the task alone. In the light of the difficulty of the task, the tendency has been rather to despair of ability even to assist in its performance and to believe that God must do it all. Jesus, however, as we have seen, did not despair. He did not, on the other hand, feel himself competent to perform the task alone. He made God absolutely necessary by affirming that he of himself could do nothing. Nor was it with him a case of "me and God" alone. In Jesus' opinion, the cooperation of each and every man was absolutely necessary. The task could be entirely accomplished only as all did their duty.

The consequence of this belief was that Jesus set out, at the very beginning of his ministry, to gather together helpers who would cooperate with him in the work of bringing in the kingdom. The little group of twelve was the early result. It was not a big group, but it was a cooperative group, so the results of its labors were tremendous. This little original group of followers soon was succeeded by a larger and still larger group, and finally gave birth to the institution of the Church which has come down to us through the ages. It can seriously be questioned whether this great cooperative society of those who are working for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth would ever have sprung up, had it not been for the fact that Jesus had defined and instituted a

great task for his followers to perform. The task of bringing in the kingdom is the chief cause and the chief excuse for the Church. The task, because of its very bigness and difficulty, required cooperation. The Church is the result.

The work of establishing the kingdom on earth requires cooperation on the part of all, not only because of the bigness of the task, but also because the ideal community for the establishment of which we work is by definition a cooperative community. We could never hope to build up a cooperative community through the use of methods which allowed for competition. It is only through cooperating that we can produce the cooperative state of affairs which we call the kingdom. The result is that we get together to work for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, and lo! we discover that just to the extent that we succeed in doing this the kingdom is here already. The voluntary association of those who cooperate for the bringing in of the kingdom is not merely the means of which the work is to be accomplished; it is part of the end which is sought. The Church is in some measure the kingdom of God on earth.

It may to some seem very strange that I should speak of the Church and cooperation in the same breath. It is undoubtedly true that displays of the competitive spirit have been and still are altogether too frequent within the body of those who ought to be working together for the establishment of a cooperative community. This is true not only of the attitude between individuals, societies, sects, and denominations within the Church, but

also of the general attitude of the Christian Church as a whole toward other non-Christian institutions. This charge constitutes another serious defect in Christianity's ability to meet the supreme need of the age.

One might rejoin, of course, by asking where else it would be possible to find a finer example of cooperation than the Church; but the fact that the Church is perhaps the least competitive of any of the organizations which could otherwise prove satisfactory to the age ought not to be allowed to hinder the members of the Church from working strenuously for a more positive and fuller manifestation of the active cooperative principle. The Christian Church cannot make a strong appeal to the age until it begins to overcome this serious weakness. There must be a tendency toward greater unity within the Church and a less antagonistic attitude toward those outside the Church. The members of the Church must cooperate more fully in serving, not themselves, but those outside, whether they be the entirely unchurched or the adherents of non-Christian religions. If the Church will interest itself more in the varied and great practical, constructive tasks of service for which it exists, it will have less time and excuse for internal dissensions and more need for reliance upon its central cooperative principle. This it must do. But even as it exists, it is the best example of what the age needs.

Thus we see that Christianity meets the need of the age for a cooperative task, not only by furnishing it with a task of such a nature that cooperation is absolutely necessary for its performance, but also by offering it the

services of a large, trained, and experienced body of workers who are already organized into a definite co-operative society. Christianity offers a task and one of the essential instruments for performing it. It offers a task at the performance of which a start has already been made. Can the age do better than to avail itself of what has already been done, the results of which are to be found in the Church? It is in the Church, or in some similar institution, that men must find that contact with each other and with God which will insure the successful performance of the task which it needs. Jesus said: "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work," and we, too, must cooperate if God's kingdom is to come on earth even as it is in heaven. We must be laborers together with God.

5. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM AS A TASK
FOR THE TASK'S SAKE: GOD THE PERSONAL IDEAL:
THE KINGDOM OF GOD THE SOCIAL IDEAL: CHRIST
AND HIS CHURCH THE SUPREME REALIZATIONS OF
THESE IDEALS: THE CROSS OF SERVICE AND TRUE
HAPPINESS OR SALVATION

It is easier to see how Christianity satisfies the need of the age for a task which can be pursued for its own sake. The work of bringing in the kingdom is a work which must be undertaken in this spirit. It is a work which requires the elimination of every particle of selfishness. It provides an exceptional opportunity for great personal risk. It is true that there was a decided element of self-seeking in those who felt that their sole duty with reference to the kingdom was to prepare themselves for its coming, and who inter-

preted this preparation merely as the adjustment of their relationship to God. It is true that rank individualism of various types has cropped out in Christian circles at different times. But, on the whole, Christianity has been true to the supreme altruism of its founder and has rejoiced to share the risks which he braved. On the whole, it has kept faith with the principle of self-sacrifice which Jesus laid down and practiced. On the whole, it has recognized that it is only through working to bring in the kingdom that men can prepare themselves for its coming, that it is only by entirely forgetting themselves in the service of others that men find joy and happiness, that it is only through losing our lives that we find them. The kingdom of God has always been regarded as an organization of self-givers, not self-seekers. In it the test of greatness is the ability to serve.

While excluding every element of selfishness, the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth allows for that high form of personalism which we have defined as the individual consciousness of the effect of one's acts of service in one's own life in the form both of increased capacity for service and of personal joy. The history of the idea of the kingdom shows that those who have worked for its establishment in the world, who have forgotten themselves in the active and sacrificial service of others, have been the most joyful people in the world. Christians have always shown a high regard for Jesus' capacity for service. His was a real capacity, developed through his work of service. It was a capacity which he himself said others might transcend. The work of bringing

in the kingdom to which he summoned men was a work which set no limits to either the opportunity or the capacity for service. In connection with it man's need for moral activity and for the development of moral character can be most satisfactorily met. The only requirement is that this service of others be not undertaken for its effect upon the individual who serves, and that these effects be regarded as social rather than individual effects. It is the person in his social capacity only that is worthy of consideration. The ideal for him is God. The person is to go on with his work of service until he is perfect even as God is perfect. Jesus never set himself up as the ideal for us. While we regard him as the truest manifestation in the flesh of what God is, yet we must look through him to the Father for our personal ideal. Christianity offers the age a task which involves personal progress toward an ideal, and the ideal toward which it is necessary for the person to progress.

The work of bringing in the kingdom, however, is a social as well as a personal task, and requires progress toward a social as well as a personal ideal. Work for work's sake allows for the consciousness of this social as well as personal progress. It allows, in other words, for the consciousness of the effects of one's acts of service upon others. An individual's service must always consist in the meeting of the needs of others. In meeting these needs, he satisfies his own, including his highest spiritual needs. But the needs of others that he can satisfy directly are only those needs which are not spiritual. One can satisfy another's physical, mental, and economic needs to

a greater or less extent, but one could never satisfy another's spiritual needs. The most one can do with respect to these spiritual needs is to lead the other into the life of sacrificial service from which alone spiritual satisfaction comes. It is thought of the race which must always be uppermost in one's service of others.

The social ideal which Christianity offers the age is what we call the kingdom of God. Whether or not this ideal requires a new name is open to dispute. It is the meaning of the ideal not the name, however, which is important, and this we have already defined above. It is this social ideal of the kingdom which — more even than the personal ideal of God and more than either the Church or Jesus, the two highest attainments of these ideals — is central in Christianity. Jesus made this social ideal central in his own life and teaching and we can do no less. His command was to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The claim of the finality of Christianity, however, rests not only upon the superiority of its social and personal ideals over those of every other religion, but especially upon the superiority of its actual realization of these ideals as found in the Church and in Jesus. The finality of Christianity rests upon a superiority of accomplishment, not merely upon a superiority of ideal. It is, of course, to the teaching and the work of Jesus that this superiority is due principally, in the final analysis. Jesus is Christianity's unique possession.

The work of realizing Christianity's social ideal, while allowing for personalism and altruism, transcends the highest altruism and fulfills the supreme requirement of

work for work's sake. How it does this we have already seen. It does it by recognizing that the most real effects of this work of service are dependent upon the continuation and increase of the work, that it is the service itself and the joy which comes directly from it that alone are permanent and constitute salvation. Salvation is not only through service; it is service. The kingdom of God is the work of establishing the kingdom of God.

In discussing the subject of salvation, Professor Rauschenbusch writes:

“Sanctification is through increased fellowship with God and man. But fellowship is impossible without an exchange of service. Here we come back to our previous proposition that the Kingdom of God is the commonwealth of cooperative service and that the most common form of sinful selfishness is the effort to escape from labor. Sanctification, therefore, can not be attained in an unproductive life, unless it is unproductive through necessity. In the long run the only true way to gain moral insight, self-discipline, humility, love, and a consciousness of coherence and dependence, is to take our place among those who serve one another by useful labor. Parasitism blinds; work reveals.”¹

Through offering the age a task which is big enough, practical enough, constructive enough, and cooperative enough to justify its being undertaken for its own sake, Christianity offers to meet the ultimate need of the age — the need of happiness or salvation. The symbol of this salvation is a cross — not a specific cross which stands for

¹Walter Rauschenbusch, “A Theology for the Social Gospel,” pp. 102, 103.

a work of salvation accomplished once for all, but a cross which each must bear or help to bear. The age envies the man who had the opportunity of relieving Jesus of the burden of his cross as he journeyed to his death on Golgotha. It rejoices in the still greater opportunity of helping him bear the heavier burden of that great task of bringing in the kingdom in the interests of which he lived, worked, and died. In this service it finds the happiness and the salvation which it so greatly desires.

6. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM AS AN ETERNAL TASK: SOCIAL AND PERSONAL IMMORTALITY: SECURITY ASSURED

Finally, Christianity meets the need of an eternal task. We saw that neither the individual nor the race would be satisfied with less than eternal salvation. They will be satisfied, in other words, with no less than the possibility of eternal work. This is what Christianity offers the race in offering it the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth. This task must last forever. The kingdom is always coming. As Professor Rauschenbusch has well said:

“An eschatology which is expressed in terms of historic development has no final consummation. Its consummations are always the basis for further development. The Kingdom of God is always coming, but we can never say, ‘Lo, here.’ Theologians often assert that this would be unsatisfactory. ‘A kingdom of social righteousness can never be perfect; man remains flesh; new generations would have to be trained anew; only by a world-catastrophe can the kingdom of glory be realized.’ Apparently we

have to postulate a static condition in order to give our minds a rest; an endless perspective of development is too taxing. Fortunately God is not tired as easily as we. If he called humanity to a halt in a 'kingdom of glory,' he would have on his hands some millions of eager spirits whom he has himself trained to ceaseless aspiration and achievement, and they would be dying of ennui. Besides, what is the use of a perfect ideal which never happens? A progressive kingdom of righteousness happens all the time in instalments, like our own sanctification. Our race will come to an end in due time; the astronomical clock is already ticking which will ring in the end. Meanwhile we are on the march toward the Kingdom of God, and getting our reward by every fractional realization of it which makes us hungry for more. A stationary humanity would be a dead humanity. The life of the race is in its growth."¹

In this paragraph from Professor Rauschenbusch, which so forcibly states this idea of the eternity of the task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth, there is a sentence which I would fain have elided. I refer to the rather pessimistic statement concerning the ultimate destiny of the race. If the race is to come to an end in due time, as Professor Rauschenbusch seems so confident that it will, hope of eternal social salvation cannot be entertained, for this hope requires, as we have already seen, that there be an eternal element in the race as well as in the task to which the race devotes itself. But I must confess that I experience not the slightest sympathy with such gloomy views of the future of the race — and this not because to hold such views seems to me to forbid the hope

¹ Rauschenbusch, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

referred to, but because I fail to see that such views are supported by the facts of the case.

It can, of course, be scientifically demonstrated that the earth in due time will reach a stage in its evolution which will not be hospitable to life in the form in which it is at present found manifested in the race. In this sense it is true that the race must sometime come to an end; but this is really no sense at all, for in this sense the race has already come to an end thousands of times. It has undergone repeated changes of form. But there is little to forbid and much to support a belief that the race will always continue to exist in some form which will permit of its being eternally active in the task of establishing God's kingdom in the world. As compared with the narrow and shortsighted view that life is possible only in the forms in which we find it manifested on this planet, I feel convinced that Bergson's ambitious and interesting theory that life is possible wherever energy descends the incline indicated by Carnot's law and where a cause of inverse direction can retard the descent — that is to say, probably "in all the worlds suspended from all the stars" — is far more in keeping with the spirit of true religion.

So far from being supported by the facts of the case or partaking of the spirit of a true faith, this argument concerning the temporality of the race, if traced to its real source, would be discovered to be the strange invention of a certain class of persons who have been interested in reviving the hope of personal immortality in those who, for various reasons, have abandoned

this hope. In abandoning the hope of personal immortality, many have clung desperately to the hope of social immortality. One of the favorite, though mistaken, ways of attempting to win these individuals back to a belief in personal immortality has been to try to destroy their belief in the eternity of the race and in social immortality. Wherever this form of argument and method of approach has had any effect at all, the effect in the majority of cases has been quite naturally to increase skepticism rather than belief. The truth of the matter is that many are right in believing in a form of social immortality which does not require a correlative belief in personal immortality of any kind, and that others have erred in overlooking the fact that belief in any form of personal immortality must involve a correlative belief in some form of social immortality. The proper way of proceeding, therefore, would be to regard an earnest belief in social immortality, which is obviously the easier belief, as a stepping-stone to a real belief in personal immortality. Such it undoubtedly has been in the case of many individuals. Such it undoubtedly should be, for fully developed faith will never rest satisfied with anything less than a belief in the immortality of the individual as well as the race — with anything less than a belief in the possibility of eternal personal as well as social salvation.

It is in Christianity that faith attains its fullest satisfaction — that the possibility of salvation is most complete. In presenting as its central feature a task which promises to last forever, and in supporting with most conclusive evidence the belief in the permanence of the

race and of the individual, Christianity makes a unique and unequalled contribution to the ultimate need of the age. It insists upon interpreting even death itself as a transition to a state where we can enjoy increased activity in the interest of the social ideal. The resurrection of Christ it interprets as a resurrection not to eternal rest, but to eternal work. While on earth Jesus labored to make this world a better place in which to live, and when he went to his Father, he went to prepare a place for us.

Christians are not only convinced that not even death itself can prevent them from being eternally active in the interests of the kingdom of God on earth, but, when they once gain an adequate conception of the nature of the task which Christianity offers and begin to experience, even in a small way, the joy which service for service's sake creates, they learn to *desire* such eternal activity. Thus immortality becomes more than a belief—salvation more than a possibility. Immortality becomes a living and an active hope, salvation a present and an assured fact. Through providing us with the strongest supports for this hope of immortality and with a task which can never play out, Christianity assures us of the possibility of *eternal* salvation as well. Truly it is in Christianity that security is made most sure — it is in Christianity that the ultimate need of the age finds its fullest satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

THE NEED SUMMARIZED: CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELATED NEEDS

We have seen how Christianity meets the supreme need of the age for a task. It does this by offering to the race the work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth. This work possesses to an unparalleled degree the characteristics which enable it to satisfy the need where it is already acutely felt and both to create and to satisfy the need where the sense of it is not yet keen. Christianity's task is big, practical, constructive, cooperative, a task which allows for the highest forms of personalism and altruism but which nevertheless must be undertaken finally for its own sake, an eternal task. To make the performance of this task the chief purpose of existence means salvation for both the individual and the race. The task is not merely the means to this salvation. It is, in a real sense, salvation itself. That is why this task must truly be regarded as the supreme need of the age.

But we have also seen that Christianity offers the race something more than a task. It offers, in other words, something more than a superior individual and social ideal. It offers the race a task which has already been begun, ideals which have already been approached. God and his kingdom are the ideals to which Christianity points as the goals toward which individual and social progress must be made. Christ and his Church are the actual historical facts to which Christianity points as the

high-water marks of individual and social development, as the way along which the individual and society must continue to progress.

1. A GUIDE IN OUR PRESENT WORK: THE HOLY SPIRIT

The whole story of Christianity's offer, however, has not yet been told. Christianity offers not only a definite goal and way of progress. It offers also in the Holy Spirit—God immanent in us and in the social order—a superior guide to progress. Salvation, individual and social, is progress in the company of the Holy Spirit, along the way of Christ and his Church, toward the goal of God and his kingdom. In offering to the age the task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth, Christianity offers to it the enjoyment of this supreme companionship of the Holy Spirit, who is the efficient guide to steady and endless progress and the sure evidence of present salvation.

2. A HISTORY OF PAST WORK: THE BIBLE

Nor can we stop here. Christianity by no means ignores the fact that others besides Christ and the members of the early Church have worked for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. It offers to the age the record not only of distinctly Christian experience and effort as found in the New Testament, but also of pre-Christian experience and effort as found in the Old Testament. Christianity was a direct development out of Judaism. Both its individual and its social ideals find their roots there. It would have been a sorry mistake for

Christianity to have refused to retain the record of those earlier efforts to realize these ideals. It was a mistake that Christianity did not make. In the Christian Bible these experiences are preserved. Christianity, in offering the race a task, offers it also a magnificent record of the experiences of those who have been superior workmen.

It cannot be doubted but that this fact greatly enhances the value of Christianity's offer. If the age accepts the task, it ought also to accept the record. To do otherwise would be as foolish as it would have been foolish for the United States to have undertaken the construction of the Panama Canal without first having become thoroughly acquainted with the results of France's prior attempt.

3. A PLAN FOR FUTURE WORK: A THEOLOGY

No big task is ever undertaken by wise men, moreover, without first working out a definite plan of procedure — without first making a careful estimate of resources and probable cost. Christian theology accomplishes this very thing for those who plan to undertake the great task of establishing God's kingdom on earth. The work of the great Christian theologians, a plan of procedure and an estimate of resources, is offered by Christianity to the race along with a task. The two should be accepted or rejected together. Success cannot follow if they are separated.

This plan or estimate which should be accepted, however, is not a definite and unchanging thing. No great task would ever be successfully accomplished unless original plans were continually altered, unless new esti-

mates were repeatedly made. It is impossible to conceive of a successful business man who is not free and able to ascertain at any moment the exact relation of his resources to his liabilities. In undertaking the work of establishing God's kingdom on earth, the age must be free and able to do the same. The need is not to accept a set and detailed plan or estimate which has been handed down from the hoary past. Rather it is to use all the materials of the past in working out a more correct estimate of the present situation and a more appropriate plan for the future.

The chief items in this plan or theology, of course, will be much the same as in the past. The Bible must be recognized as a chief source for the materials from which the theology is to be made. God and his kingdom must be recognized as the ends which the individual and society seek. The supreme realizations of these two ideals must be found in Christ and his Church. The serious consequences of sin — that is, of the lack of a task which can command wholehearted devotion and of the consciousness of the possession of the means by which such a task can be performed — must be taken account of. The Holy Spirit, who is at once the guide to happiness and the evidence of the presence of salvation, must be given due consideration. But the details must be filled in by each succeeding generation and by each separate individual. Each new age must see to it that the theology which it accepts represents a plan for the performance of a task which is supremely well suited to its outstanding needs. A theology is one of the accompany-

ing needs of the age which historic Christianity cannot supply in full. Out of the traditional materials handed down to us, plus our own individual and social experiences, we must through the exercise of reason work out some plan by which our future activities in the interest of God's kingdom on earth can be regulated.

Is not this just what we have been doing in the entire preceding discussion? The result is in some sense a theology—a theology which at least begins to meet the needs of the writer, and one which, so the writer feels, should in some measure meet the need of the age.

The supreme need of the age is for a task big enough to appeal strongly to man's sense of infinite capacity for service; a task which is practical in the sense that it is a serious attempt to satisfy all of man's needs; a task which is exclusively constructive; a task which allows men to work together to a common end; a task which, while allowing for the highest forms of personalism and altruism, can be undertaken for its own sake; an eternal task. The experience of the War is our finest piece of evidence that this need is felt acutely by the present age. While it satisfied the need partly and temporarily, the War must be regarded as not so much the satisfier as the discoverer of the need. Because of it the need is only felt more acutely. The nature of the need is such that it is clear that only religion can adequately and permanently satisfy it; but this must be a religion of activity, a religion of work, a religion which can offer not only a definite task of the kind which the age needs, but also a promise of the means necessary for its accomplishment.

Christianity, because of its superior meeting of these requirements, can lay just claim to be the final religion. This claim, however, must be progressively verified and strengthened by increased consciousness of need of all kinds and by improved methods of meeting it. It is only as the forces of Christianity become more practical, constructive, cooperative, and truly altruistic that Christianity will be recognized to be the final religion of the race.



